

## **Caught in the Web**

Police Officer: So what was stolen?

Hutchinson: What wasn't? They got the TV, stereo ...

Erika: Dad they took my computer.

Hutchinson: ... and both computers.

Hutchinson: It really happened— it wasn't just a bad dream. I wish I could figure out how all this happened.

Dot Com: You Hutchinson? Craig Hutchinson?

Hutchinson: Uh, Yea.

Dot Com: Man, you really got ripped off, big screen TV, jewelry, two computers.

Hutchinson: Yeah, they got my coin collection too and ... hey how do you know this stuff? Who are you? And how did you get into my computer? It wasn't even here a minute ago.

Dot Com: Get a grip, Hutchinson. We've got twelve minutes and forty three seconds to nab the cyber punks that robbed you.

Hutchinson: Cyber punks?

Dot Com: Yea they got all the information they needed through your computers and then they came by and robbed them. Heh, well you've got to love a good irony.

Hutchinson: But how?

Dot Com: That's why I'm here. [Ring] Oops, I'm picking up a death-con warning from six months ago, come on lets go.

Hutchinson: But where?

Dot Com: Where else? Back in time.

Hutchinson: Well, shouldn't I change first?

Dot Com: No time. Besides you look great. Come on!

[Screaming]

Hutchinson: Wow.

Dot Com: The name's Dot Com, Detective First-Class, Cyber Sector. Pretty amazing place, isn't it?

Hutchinson: Uh, amazing. Where are we?

Dot Com: Cyberspace, the net, the web, you know out there. Millions of people come here every day to explore new worlds. You can meet people in chat rooms, entertain yourself with games, visit online museums, access libraries around the world, even shop 'till you drop.

Hutchinson: Wow.

Dot Com: But, just like the real world its got its dangers.

Hutchinson: What was that?

Dot Com: From a partial reading I would say it was the punks that robbed your house.

Hutchinson: What? Well turn around, do something.

Dot Com: Aw, chill out Hutchinson I got a better idea.

Hutchinson: Well, this is our house.

Dot Com: Exactly.

Hutchinson: Well, we didn't go anywhere.

Dot Com: If you think slipping through a crack in the space time continuum isn't going anywhere.

Denise: Craig?

Hutchinson: Denise. Oh uh, I can explain this, well, no I can't but he can.

Denise: Craig?

Dot Com: Don't bother Hutchinson we're in another dimension.

Hutchinson: That's, that's

Dot Com: You

Hutchinson: Me

Denise: I'm not becoming a computer widow am I?

Hutchinson (past): Uh?

Denise: You've been on that thing all morning.

Hutchinson (past): Oh, yea. I'm just joining an online service.

Hutchinson: I remember this, it was six months ago.

Dot Com: Right the scanner pin points it as your first cyber goof.

Hutchinson: What, joining the online service?

Dot Com: No, watch.

Denise: Why do they need all that personal information?

Hutchinson (past): I don't know.

Denise: Well, who has access to it?

Hutchinson (past): Well, I'm sure it's ok otherwise they wouldn't ask for it.

Dot Com: See anything wrong with what you're doing?

Hutchinson: Not really.

Dot Com: Cyberspace rule number one: never give out personal information, even when you are joining an online service. That information, like your real name and hometown, can be accessed by anybody and that can put you and your family in danger.

Hutchinson: Well I don't see how it can ...

[Ring]

Dot Com: Uh oh.

Hutchinson: What is it?

Dot Com: Your daughter

Hutchinson: Erika?

Hutchinson: Is she in danger?

Dot Com: Looks like it.

Hutchinson: She's working on a home economics assignment.

Dot Com: Exactly.

Hutchinson: You made it sound like she was in danger, she's looking a recipes for cheesecake on the Internet.

Dot Com: Look at the next website she is going to click on. Not exactly the sort of cheesecake your daughter had in mind.

Hutchinson: No! Erika stop!

Dot Com: Try whispering.

Hutchinson: What?

Dot Com: Whisper in her ear.

[Hutchinson whispers in Erika's ear]

Hutchinson: You mean I have the power to change things?

Dot Com: That's the whole point. If we can find out where the criminals got the information we can change it so the burglary never happened.

Hutchinson: Was this connected to the burglary?

Dot Com: Doesn't appear to be but pornography is one of the biggest dangers for kids in cyberspace. A lot of it is extremely graphic and violent and so easy to access that the child could stumble upon it by accident. As you just saw.

Dot Com: Another danger is the people Erica can meet on line.

Hutchinson: I've heard the stories but I think mostly she has met some pretty decent kids.

Dot Com: Oh there's lots of nice people on line but there's also hardened criminals and its impossible to tell them apart. People aren't always who they claim to be. In fact you should consider everyone you meet on line to be a total stranger.

Hutchinson: That seems kind of paranoid.

Dot Com: She's in a kids only chat room right now. Let's see who she's talking to. First is Annie.

Annie: So Erika where you from?

Erika: I'm from Auburn.

Annie: Hey, me too.

Hutchinson: Seems nice enough.

Dot Com: I agree. Next is Matt.

Matt: What's your favorite movie?

Erika: I like Titanic.

Annie: So do I.

Hutchinson: So far, so good.

Dot Com: And finally, let's meet Katie. Looks like "Katie" could use a shave.

Hutchinson: My daughter is talking with him.

Dot Com: Afraid so, let's listen in.

Annie: This subject's getting old.

Matt: No kidding.

"Katie": [on the computer] Let's have a private chat Erika.

[To the other kids] Adios to the rest of you.

[To Erika] Ever met someone face to face?

Erika: From the chat room?

"Katie": Yeah

Erika: No, never.

"Katie": I did twice. It was cool. One's my best friend now.

Erika: Really?

"Katie": Really. We do everything together.

Erika: It would be too weird.

“Katie”: We should try it.

Erika: You and me?

“Katie”: Yeah. Where do you live?

Dot Com: You know what to do.

[Hutchinson whispers in Erika’s ear]

Erika: I can’t do this without talking to my parents first.

“Katie”: Parents wreck everything, that’s their job. They hate to see us have fun. You like to have fun don’t you?

Erika: Sorry, but I have to ask first. Bye.

“Katie”: Hey, I thought we were friends.

Erika: Mom ...

Hutchinson: Whew, man that was way too close. Well at least we know who robbed us now.

Dot Com: Afraid not, my readings indicate negative.

Hutchinson: You mean there are more creeps out there. She is never ever using another computer again for the rest of her life.

Dot Com: I know how you feel but how practical is that, this is the information age.

Hutchinson: Well, what am I suppose to do?

Dot Com: To start with, you’ve got to get more involved with Erika on line. Visit some of her favorite websites on evening, play some games together, she can probably show you a thing or two about getting around in cyber space.

Hutchinson: Well, that’s true but I can’t be looking over her shoulder 24 hours a day.

Dot Com: Well you might want to look into a software program that monitors or limits Internet access. But really there’s no substitute for common sense. Do you insist on meeting Erika’s friends?

Hutchinson: Sure.

Dot Com: Do you warn her not to talk to strangers?

Hutchinson: Of course.

Dot Com: Well then you can probably use the same rules for her on line experience. Just sit down as a family and agree as to what she can or cannot do online. Make sure she's aware of all the dangers.

Hutchinson: Yeah, like never ever, ever arranging a face to face meeting with anyone she meets online unless we give her permission and we go with her to the first meeting.

Dot Com: Right and here's another idea – move the computer out of Erika's room, put it in a more central part of your home where there are people around. In most cases where children are victimized the computer is in their room where they can cyber surf unseen and unsupervised.

[Ring]

Dot Com: This is odd, I'm picking up a signal but it's not coming from any of your current systems. Where's your old computer?

Hutchinson: We sold it to our neighbor's kid Jason.

Dot Com: Did you erase the hard drive?

Hutchinson: Of course I deleted everything.

Dot Com: You just deleted it?

Hutchinson: Well, sure what was I suppose to do?

Hutchinson: I'm not to sure about this time travel stuff. Whoa, Jason.

Dot Com: We're inside Jason's computer. Let's check out the drive. Recognize this?

Hutchinson: Well that's our finances program and our tax returns and our personal letters. But I deleted all of them.

Dot Com: Deleting them doesn't get rid of them, that simply tells the computer that the space they're using is free to be written over by other information. Anyone with a good utilities program and a bad motive can access your files. To really get rid of your files you have to completely reformat your hard drive. Some utilities programs overwrite your files with blank data so be sure to look for utilities programs that use a white file or disk.

Hutchinson: Can you tell if Jason got into our files?

Dot Com: No, it looks like they haven't been touched. I'll zap them out.

Hutchinson: Whew, that's a relief. Jason's such a nice kid I hate to think he had anything to do with the burglary.

Dot Com: No, he's been far too busy committing credit card fraud.

Hutchinson: What?!?

Dot Com: Right now he's running a hacking program that's trying to validate credit card numbers.

Hutchinson: Jason? Little Jason?

Dot Com: Yup, well according to this he met a group of guys through a news group, they told him he could make big bucks by just punching some numbers into a computer. So, now he's a hacker.

Hutchinson: I'm surprised Jason got involved, he's such a smart kid.

Dot Com: Hey, cyber space is full of schemes and scams, it's not hard to get snagged by one, especially for kids. In fact right now someone is about to get suckered.

Hutchinson: Not Erika.

Dot Com: Nope. You.

Hutchinson: I'd never fall for a scam.

Dot Com: We'll see.

Hutchinson: Was that a ...?

Dot Com: Cookie? Yeah.

Hutchinson: What's it doing here?

Dot Com: Some websites put a cookie on your computer when you visit them. It's a record of things like what parts of their site you visited, the type of computer system you have, your Internet provider, your email address, even the sites you visited right before and after.

Hutchinson: Well, why did they put it on my computer?

Dot Com: Mainly to keep track of you for next time you visit. But it can also be used to generate a mailing list. Some recent browser software can notify you if a cookie's been put on your system and give you the option of rejecting it.



Hutchinson: Well, where's that one headed.

Dot Com: It looks like Erika's working on her home economics assignment again.

Hutchinson: Oh, great.

Dot Com: Oh, that's odd.

Hutchinson: What?

Dot Com: According to my scanner we're heading right into a ...

Hutchinson: [Screams] Whoa, whoa what was that?

Dot Com: A virus swarm! Come on Hutchinson we've got to make it to the next junction.

Hutchinson: Whoa, watch out!

[Monster sounds]

Dot Com: Whoa, that was close. Looks like a new strain, hope you updated your virus protection program.

Hutchinson: I never knew they were that vicious.

Dot Com: Oh, they are getting nastier everyday. One person had them come through his email, fried his whole system like a free range egg.

Hutchinson: Oh that last ride was a bit much, I feel faint.

Dot Com: It's just inter-dimensional debilitation.

Hutchinson: Uh?

Dot Com: In layman terms, you can stay in this dimension for another couple of minutes and then poof you're gone.

Hutchinson: What can we do about it?

Dot Com: Solve your case ASAP.

Hutchinson: You were saying something about a scam ...

Hutchinson (past): Honey listen to this, did you know your state government is holding millions of dollars worth of unclaimed inheritances, some of it could be yours. And for

only \$35 you can find out if your one of the lucky people who stand to inherit thousands of dollars. I think it's worth a shot.

Denise: Craig I think I heard there's a number you can call to find out if you are on that list we don't need to spend \$35.

Dot Com: Cyber space is full of schemes and scams make money fast, get rich quick, we can help you win the lottery, earn thousands of dollars working from home, most of these scams either charge you for something you can get for free or ask you for money up front for something you'll never see. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.

Hutchinson: [whispering] She's got a good point Craig, don't do it you stubborn idiot.

Hutchinson (past): Honey you've got a good point. I won't do it you stubborn idiot.

Denise: Uh?

[Ring]

Dot Com: This could be it, I'm getting a death-con three warning.

Hutchinson: From where?

Dot Com: Erika's room.

Hutchinson: Is it that guy again?

Hutchinson: What's that?

Dot Com: Let's see, it looks like one of those fill in the blank biographies people circulate on line. You answer a bunch of questions, what's your favorite food, your favorite movie, your favorite song.

Hutchinson: Looks innocent enough to me. Hey, that's it!

Dot Com: What?

Hutchinson: Right there. Favorite vacation: two weeks at the beach every year at the end of July. That's how they knew the whole family would be gone and when and then they could just come in here and take everything. Not any more.

[Hutchinson whispers into Erika's ear]

Hutchinson: We did it! And with over a minute to spare, when I get back I'm going to have a long talk with Erika about giving out personal information on the net not to

mention I'm going to move her computer out of her room. Oh, maybe you should zap us back to the future.

Dot Com: I could do that but we might want to solve this before we leave.

Hutchinson: I thought we just did.

Dot Com: We found one clue and we've got forty three seconds to find the other one, where do you think we should go?

Hutchinson: Let's see they knew when we be gone but how did they find out where we lived?

Denise: You've been on that thing all morning.

Hutchinson (past): Oh, yeah. I'm just joining an online service.

Hutchinson: It was when I filled out the personal information in the member profile. That's where they got our name, our town, and what kind of computers we use.

Dot Com: It was a no-brainer to trace Erika's email address back to this member profile, any one can, and with your name and town they simply had to do an online search to get the street address. [Beeps] 10 seconds and counting.

Hutchinson: [Groaning] Help me Dot Com! I can't do it!

Dot Com: This is your problem Hutchinson only you can fix it.

Hutchinson: [Whispering] Don't do it.

TV: Topping the local news today police have cracked a ring of criminals that has been using the Internet to gather information to break into people's homes. Heading the investigation was Detective Doug Com. Safety in cyber space is a very important issue for our times we all need to know what we can do to protect our self from cyber crime and keep our families safe.